

## Environmental End-of-Year Report December 2022

**Happy New Year!** — Our entire staff are state certified law enforcement officers. We are commissioned by the County Sheriff and the County Judge. The Environmental Division educates the public, eradicates illegal dump sites, and enforces environmental laws of Arkansas and ordinances of Benton County. It is our hope that you will find value in our mission and enjoy learning about how we achieve our goals in this end-of-the-year report for 2022. — *Teresa Sidwell, Director*

**Staff Training** — Environmental Enforcement Officers must be prepared for anything and capable of making sound decisions. In order to effectively serve the public it is important that we continue to develop our skills. In December all staff completed the online course Duty to Intervene from the University of Arkansas Criminal Justice Institute as well as in-house training for I.T. Security.

We obtain a wide range of field and classroom training in law enforcement, hazardous materials awareness, firearms, illegal dumping, CPR, drones, Glock Armorer, and physical fitness.

Sr. Ofc. Filbeck (our own state certified officer training instructor) conducts regular in-house training for our staff and field trains every new officer in our division. In-house training has saved our division thousands in travel, food, lodging, and course costs. All together our staff obtained more than 360 hours of training in 2022.



**Inmate Crews** — The Benton County Sheriff's Office has assisted our agency with inmate crews (pictured left) 35 times in 2022! We are so very grateful to have their help. They do the heavy lifting like removing large numbers of dumped tires and unloading them again at the District to be recycled, they go down county roads and pick up litter and this year they also assisted us with garden maintenance at the teaching garden located at the Road Department in Bentonville.



Benton County Environmental Division is celebrating  
30 years of Education-Eradication-Enforcement  
Call us 479-271-1083 to report dump sites and learn  
how you can help keep our County clean.

**Environmental Education** — Our most important goal is to educate the public about proper waste disposal. We achieve this by sharing information at NWA\_environmental on Instagram, on Youtube, at our teaching garden, attending events like the Costumes, Candy & Cops Carnival and the Green Earth event at the Botanical Gardens of the Ozarks, road signs, and advertising like that featured at the Pinnacle Mall in 2022 (pictured left).





Drones are a necessary tool for surveilling large parcels of land and improves officer situational awareness with a much larger field of view. We deploy drones to safely investigate areas that may otherwise be unsafe to traverse on foot. In December 5 drone flights were conducted. There were 101 successful flights in 2022.



**Community Policing** - We are proud of our record of assisting other law enforcement agencies, fire departments, the Health Department, Corps of Engineers, regional solid waste districts, and our citizens. We work extra patrols in areas where there have been a large amount of illegal dumping with the expectation that regular presence of Environmental Officers in these areas will curtail occurrences of roadside dumping. In December we finished strong with 16 extra patrols conducted and during 2022 we conducted 66 extra patrols. Our signs not only warn dumpers that large fines are associated with dumping but there are also free alternatives. In December we obtained a gas-powered post hole digger that will speed up the installation of signs and make the signs much more sturdy. During 2022 we installed 16 “no littering” and/or “illegal dumping” signs. We also installed surveillance cameras in 22 areas of frequent dumping in 2022.

*During extra patrols we collect litter.*



*Illegal Dumping sign.*



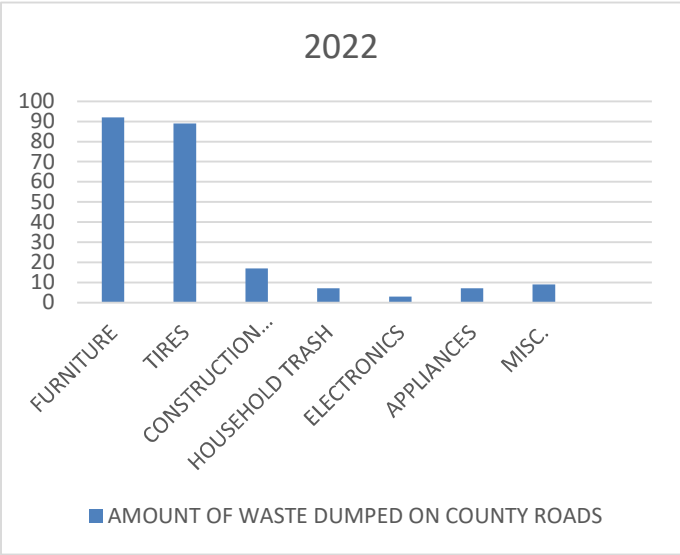
*TV found dumped on the shores of Beaver Lake.*





**Roadside Dumping** – In 2022 we removed waste from 81 illegal dump sites along county roads. Furniture and tires are dumped more than any other type of waste by far but the occurrence of tires being dumped has dramatically dropped over the last year. Dump sites present hazards to our community including water pollution, flooding, fires, and diseases from mosquitos and rodents. The community is also affected economically due to the cost of remediation, reduction of tourism and reduced property values. In December of this year we remediated 8 sites in the Lowell and Rogers areas. The most roadside dumps in 2022 occurred in November when we cleaned up 14 sites.

December 2022



January 2022



June. 2022





## Environmental Division Programs – Our division proudly provide the following programs to our community.

October 2022 Costumes, Candy & Cops Carnival



October 2022 Tire cleanup on Beaver Lake.



September 2022 Teaching Garden



September 2022 Employee fair.



April 2022 Volunteer Litter Cleanup



March 2022 Special Waste Drop-off



1. The **Adopt a Road** program includes volunteers from service organizations, businesses and families who help make our county cleaner. They adopt sections of the 2,000 miles of Benton County roads and pick up litter twice a year.
2. The **Special Waste Drop-off** program is a collaborative effort between the Benton County Environmental Division, BCSWD, and most cities to provide recycling and safe disposal of large bulky household items including furniture, electronics, tires, scrap metal, appliances, and a variety of household hazardous waste.
3. The **Environmental Education** program educates both young people and the general public about environmental responsibility.
4. The Benton County **Green Team** is coordinated by our division to lead a group of agencies, businesses, and citizens working together to provide environmental education through public events.
5. The **Teaching Garden** located at the Road Department on 14th St., Bentonville is maintained by our division. We promote the benefits of alternative stormwater management at this teaching garden.
6. **Waste Not - Want Not** is the county government's internal recycling program. We partner with the County Janitorial Department to provide in-house recycling stations, desk recycling bins, coordination of recycling services, collection of used toner cartridges, batteries, and electronic devices.

## COST OF DISPOSAL 2015-2022

| <b>SPECIAL WASTE PROGRAMS</b> | <b>COST PAID BY COUNTY</b> | <b># OF LOADS</b> | <b>COST /LOAD</b> |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 2015 Cleanup events           | \$87,819.71                | 2,752             | \$31.91           |
| 2016 Convenience Centers      | \$143,639.53               | 11,330            | \$12.68           |
| 2017 Convenience Centers      | \$174,986.73               | 15,749            | \$11.11           |
| 2018 Convenience Centers      | \$133,659.32               | 18,703            | \$7.15            |
| 2019 Convenience Centers      | \$191,451.50               | 20,576            | \$9.30            |
| 2020 Convenience Centers      | \$177,703.45               | 19,745            | \$9.00            |
| 2021 Special Waste Drop-off   | \$157,123.35               | 16,126            | \$9.74            |
| 2022 Special Waste Drop-off   | \$140,696.77               | 14,665            | \$9.59            |

## SPECIAL WASTE DROP-OFF COLLECTIONS - DECEMBER 2022

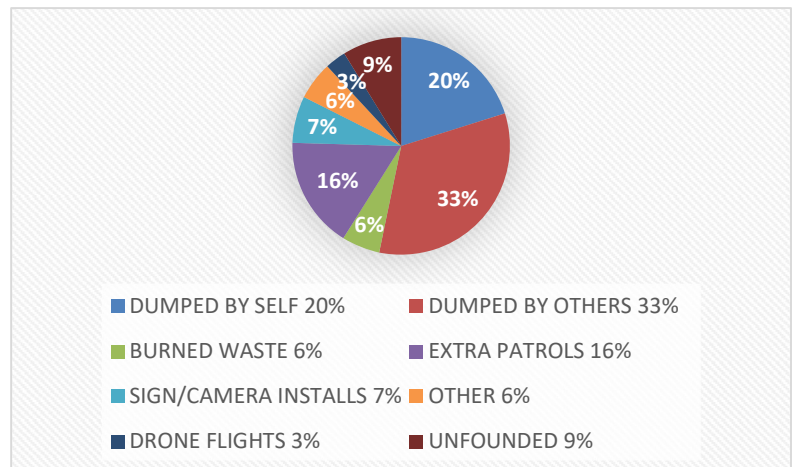
| # OF LOADS | APPLIANCES | ELECTRONICS | METAL | FURNITURE | MATTRESSES | HHW | TIRES |
|------------|------------|-------------|-------|-----------|------------|-----|-------|
| 1225       | 359        | 339         | 998   | 769       | 184        | 319 | 604   |

## SPECIAL WASTE DROP-OFF COLLECTIONS – 2022

|             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| # OF LOADS  | 14,665 |
| APPLIANCES  | 2,557  |
| ELECTRONICS | 4,295  |
| METAL       | 15,360 |
| FURNITURE   | 10,327 |
| MATTRESSES  | 2,080  |
| HHW         | 3,203  |
| TIRES       | 6,019  |

The table above shows that Benton County citizens use the Special Waste Drop-off program mostly for the disposal of metal and furniture.

In 2022 people dumping waste on others or along roadsides occurred 33% of the time. 20% of cases are property owners dumping waste (most frequently auto parts and household garbage) on their own property. Burning waste still happens in Benton County but only occurs 6% of the time. Other violations and actions include littering, spilling loads on the road, agency assists, and public information in 6% of our cases. About 16% of our cases are extra patrols and 7% are installations of signs and/or cameras. We conducted drone flights in 3% of our cases and 9% of cases reported to our office were unfounded.





## Environmental Enforcement

In December we received 51 new cases and for the year of 2022 we received 392 new reports. We investigate environmental violations generated by citizen reports on properties located outside city limits and reserve citations as a last resort. Citations were written on 25 cases in 2022 (6.4%). We provide education, cleanup of illegal dump sites along county roads, installation of signs, installation of surveillance cameras and extra patrols in areas of frequent dumping. The following are some cases that were closed in December.

BEFORE



AFTER



Pictured above is an on-going case involving multiple properties near Lowell. This particular property has been cleaned up. It was so bad it required a large loader and multiple trailers to remove the amount of waste renters had dumped throughout the years.

BEFORE



AFTER



Pictured above are tires, fuel cans, and plastic removed from a ditch that drains into Beaver Lake near Rogers.



The following property is outside the city limits of Gravette. The property has 3 family members that own this parcel. After initial contact with the property owners, they immediately began the cleanup. They produced receipts where more than 190 tires were taken to the solid waste district and over 35,800 pounds of solid waste was taken to the Siloam Springs transfer station. The family had run an automotive business at this property since the early 1980's. One of the property owners said "I have wanted to get this cleaned up for years and this was the motivation I needed."

## BEFORE



## AFTER



Extra Patrols are an important part of our job. We pick up litter and other illegally dumped waste. We also look for evidence of who committed the crime. Sometimes there is so much litter that we ask for an inmate crew to assist. We also check our signs and surveillance cameras while patrolling.



The following case was outside the city limits of Pea Ridge where the fire department responded to an illegal burn of furniture. Evidence was found at the scene. No physical contact was made with the suspect (tenant). A letter was sent to the suspect and upon return for a follow up inspection the incident location was cleaned up and the tenant moved away.

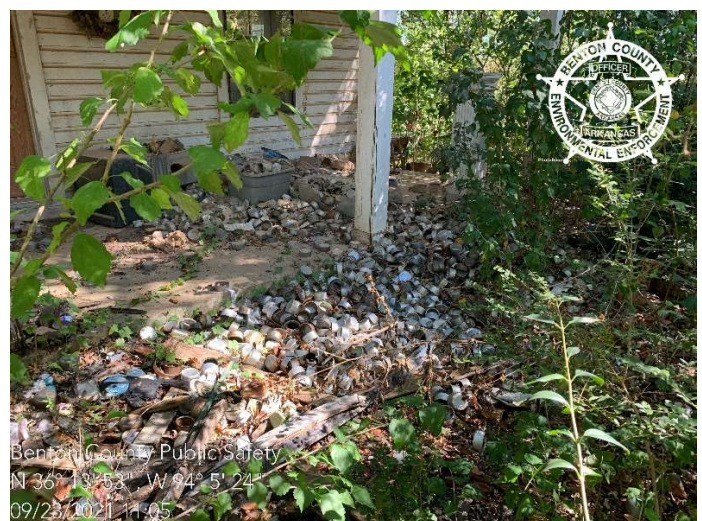
#### BEFORE



#### AFTER



The defendant in this case (property pictured right) that went to court has property that is riddled with empty feline food cans, furniture, and general waste on the ground surrounding a partially burned house. 569 days after the case was opened it went to court in December and the defendant was ordered to pay \$100 court cost, \$500 fine, \$20 BC jail fine with no similar cases for the next 12 months. The defendant was not ordered to clean up the property. The Environmental staff has remained diligent with remediating properties. Only 6.4% of our cases end up in court after we have exhausted every other avenue available to us. We are fighting a losing battle when defendants are allowed to walk away from the mess they have caused.



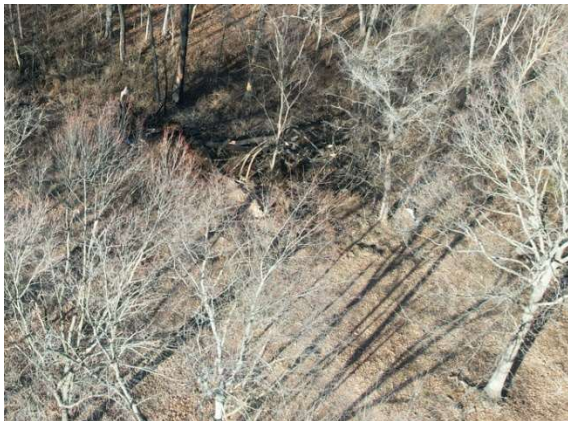


The following case located outside the city of Gravette and Centerton had been open a little over a year. The property owner's father passed away a few years prior and a sibling had allowed nefarious activities and illegal disposal of solid waste on the property. After the sibling was arrested and sent to prison on drug related charges, the property owner was able to gain control of the property. The property owner secured the property and stopped access of those who were there for illegal purposes. During the cleanup, an elderly family member unintentionally started a fire while cutting metal that engulfed approximately 3,000+ tires. The property owner continued to get the property cleaned up and additional time was granted. In December the case was finally closed.

## BEFORE



## AFTER



This property on Gaiche Road outside Gentry was covered in household trash that was thrown onto the ground (pictured left) and later burned. The property owner had a tough time evicting the tenants but in December after about 2 months he was able to clean up all the waste and even replaced the mobile home with a brand new one (pictured right).





## The Year in Pictures

January – Inmate crew pick up large dump site



March – Waste from volunteer cleanup on Old Prairie Creek Road

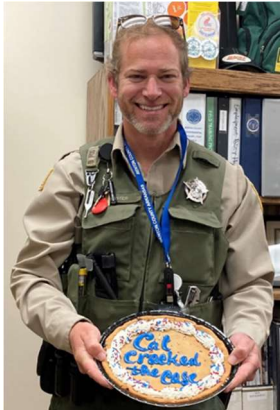


April – Melody Kwok, BC Communications Director produced our first Earth Day video

May – Petpalooza in Bentonville



June–Ofc. Gunter cracks a big case August – Back to School event, Bentonville September – we host Glock Armorer class



October – Litter Pickup event

November – freezer dumped in ditch

December – Grapple truck detail





**ENVIRONMENTAL OFFENSES** and actions initiated in December.

| OFFENSE TYPE                           | QTY |
|--|-----|
| Burn (appliances)                      | 0   |
| Burn (auto bodies & parts)             | 0   |
| Burn (construction debris)             | 1   |
| Burn (electronics)                     | 0   |
| Burn (furniture)                       | 0   |
| Burn (general waste)                   | 0   |
| Burn (household garbage)               | 0   |
| Burn (mobile home)                     | 0   |
| Burn (tires)                           | 0   |
| Bury (auto bodies & parts)             | 0   |
| Bury (construction debris)             | 0   |
| Bury (electronics)                     | 0   |
| Bury (furniture)                       | 0   |
| Bury (general waste)                   | 0   |
| Bury (household garbage)               | 0   |
| Bury (mobile home)                     | 0   |
| Bury (trees)                           | 0   |
| Dumped by others (appliances)          | 0   |
| Dumped by others (auto bodies & parts) | 0   |
| Dumped by others (construction debris) | 4   |
| Dumped by others (electronics)         | 1   |
| Dumped by others (furniture)           | 3   |
| Dumped by others (general waste)       | 5   |
| Dumped by others (household garbage)   | 0   |
| Dumped by others (metal)               | 1   |
| Dumped by others (mobile home)         | 0   |
| Dumped by others (tires)               | 4   |
| Dumped by others (trees)               | 0   |
| Dumped by self (appliances)            | 0   |
| Dumped by self (auto bodies & parts)   | 2   |
| Dumped by self (construction debris)   | 1   |
| Dumped by self (electronics)           | 0   |
| Dumped by self (furniture)             | 0   |
| Dumped by self (general waste)         | 5   |
| Dumped by self (household garbage)     | 1   |
| Dumped by self (metal)                 | 0   |
| Dumped by self (mobile home)           | 0   |
| Dumped by self (tires)                 | 0   |
| OTHER                                  | QTY |
| Unfounded                              | 4   |
| Agency Assist                          | 2   |
| Camera Installation                    | 1   |
| Extra Patrol                           | 16  |
| Littering                              | 0   |
| Sign installation                      | 2   |
| Drone Flight                           | 5   |

| ACTIONS TAKEN THIS MONTH         | QTY |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| NOTICE OF VIOLATIONS ISSUED      | 0   |
| WARNINGS ISSUED                  | 0   |
| CITATIONS ISSUED                 | 2   |
| WARRANTS ISSUED                  | 0   |
| COURT APPEARANCES                | 0   |
| CASE STATUS                      | QTY |
| CASES OPENED THIS MONTH          | 51  |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES OPENED YTD | 392 |

**What does an Environmental Officer Investigate?**

Environmental Officers are limited to enforcement of solid waste violations in unincorporated Benton County and do not regulate inside any city limits.

We DO NOT investigate septic issues, structure fires, agricultural waste, dead animals such as pets or wild animals, or the illegal disposal of hazardous material.

Our division responds to violations of solid waste regulations that may include;

1. Construction or operation of a solid waste disposal facility or disposal site.
2. Dumping of solid waste upon property owned by another person.
3. Dumping of solid waste on the side of public roads or public property.
4. Solid waste on one's own property that can potentially create a public nuisance or health hazard.
5. Dumping of solid waste into a waterway.
6. Burning of solid waste.
7. Burying of solid waste.

